Volume 17 No. 10 February 2007

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Next time, we'll be ready for them

Port Militarization Resistance returns to defend Port of Olympia

by Sandy Mayes

"Port Militarization Resistance is organized to end our community's complicity in the illegal occupation of Iraq by stopping the US Military's use of the Port of Olympia."
PMR statement of purpose – 1/21/2007

In May 2006, hundreds of US Army combat vehicles called "Strykers" rolled through the streets of our town and into our port for shipment to the war in Iraq. It wasn't the first time convoys of military equipment had been shipped to the war through the Port of Olympia, but never before did the cargo present such an immediate and visually graphic connection with that war.

Over the objections of many in the community, the military had resumed its use of the Port in 2004 after a 17-year hiatus. And although, by May 2006, community members had spent two years actively opposing military shipments through a variety of avenues, there was never a plan for how to respond or intervene as the shipments actually occurred.

So it wasn't until May 24, 2006, on Day 4 of this military shipment, with nearly all its cargo already parked safely inside the Port fence, that a coordinated act of civil disobedience brought the convoy to a temporary halt. As a caravan of Strykers rounded the first curve at the southern end of Marine Drive, escorted by the Olympia Police Department, a dozen people stepped into the road and dozens more stood along the roadside providing a supportive presence and witness.

After a long process during which nine were arrested, another line of people stepped in behind the first. At this point the OPD and Army officers talked things over. The convoy suddenly began to move, made a sharp U-turn, and detoured through town to Franklin Street. Near the entrance to the Port, several protesters who ran to the area to block the way were aggressively wrestled and dragged from the road and ultimately subdued by Thurston County Sheriff's deputies. The convoy passed through and those people were released without charges.

> I believe that the Olympia peace movement is now ripe for mass actions of civil disobedience.

As it turned out, this was the last of 20 convoys to be loaded onto a US naval ship called the *Pomeroy*, which docked at the Port of Olympia on May 29. There would not be another act of coordinated civil disobedience until the famous event on May 30 when, during a large demonstration outside the Port entrance, a gate was lifted off its hinges and those holding it lowered it to the ground. A jumble of people rushed in, allegedly crossing an invisible "boundary," and laid themselves at the feet of a line of agitated sheriff's deputies in full riot gear. These committed individuals became known as the "Olympia 22" and their trial is still pending. Those arrested on May 24 were never charged.

Time to regroup

The military has not returned to our port since May 2006 and much has transpired since then. Over 3000 US soldiers have now died in the war, as well as hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. As polling demonstrates ever-rising numbers in opposition to the war in Iraq, the Bush Administration is escalating that war and has plans to expand to Iran and beyond. The mood in the country is shifting; tension is rising and everywhere people are moving beyond their previous comfort zones in expressing opposition. The mounting impeachment movement is one example.

Locally, in response to speculation that the military might resume shipments through the Port of Olympia sometime over the next couple of months, a group called Port Militarization Resistance (PMR) called a meeting on Jan 21, 2007. PMR was formed as a sub-group of the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, in the midst of the May protests, to stop military shipments through the Port of Olympia and became inactive in Fall 2006. The recent meeting was a first step toward regrouping; it brought in many new people and fresh ideas and energy.

The discussion was preliminary. No decisions regarding strategies or specific plans were made, nor were any fresh documents generated – nothing formally decided or prepared to present to the public other than the statement of purpose cited at the top of this article. Nevertheless, it would seem timely and prudent to at least convey some observations about the meeting and the buzz it has generated.

Continuum of actions

One key proposal at the PMR meeting which got a lot of support is a "continuum of actions." It begins with *public education* to consistently and clearly communicate our goals and objectives. We then work on *prevention* of further military shipments by petitioning the Port Commissioners and other elected bodies. If those efforts are unsuccessful we use *civil disobedience* to block the convoys, openly communicating our intentions well in advance of planned actions. And if the convoys get through, all

▸ **Port Resistance** continued on page 9

How to outlaw homelessness, and not the homeless

by Marco Rosaire Rossi

France has undergone a mini-explosion in anti-poverty activism. For the past few weeks, hundreds of people have been camping out on the streets, out of necessity or out of protest, to bring attention to France's homeless problem. The primary goal of the demonstrators, who are from a variety of social classes, was to secure a legally enforceable right to housing – and, remarkably, they have done it!

In his New Year's address to the nation, President Jacques Chirac gave lip service to idea of a right to housing. By Jan. 8 the government agreed to enact new laws mandating housing for the homeless. Around 27,000 new places in shelters were created for France's 86,000 homeless. By Jan. 17, a bill was presented to the cabinet that will provide French citizens with the means to challenge infringements on their right to housing in the courts. With these measures, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, believes that all of France's least fortunate will have a legal right to housing by 2008. By that time, France will have become the second nation in the world – next to Scotland – that guarantees the right to housing.

These reforms in housing rights came from a conservative source: the French Constitution. For years, France has recognized the right to housing via international agreements. Though not necessarily legally binding, French courts have accepted the moral persuasion of Article 25 of The United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) – which declares: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being (including)... housing. " Also, the country is a signer to the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights (1976) – which is legally binding – and has the same language as the Universal Declaration in its own Article 11. In addition, the highest court in France concluded in 1996 that the "right to housing" was "an objective with a constitutional value." Seizing upon this legal backdrop, activists were finally able to give these laws some teeth, and transformed moral arguments into fulfilled promises.

Seperating civil liberties from equality

In the United States the story is a lot different. Rather than opening up to the needs and concerns of the poor, the government (at all levels) has been closing its doors. The situation is especially frightening on the municipal level – the place where the homeless have typically gotten the most aid.

Many cities have passed, and/or are working on passing anti-homeless legislation that threatens civil liberties. In Las Vegas, Nevada, the City Council passed an ordinance banning the feeding of homeless in public as an attempt to shut down a Food Not Bombs operation. In Worcester, Massachusetts, the city and the public library attempted to limit the amount of books a homeless person could check out to two. In Fresno, California, the city looked into making pushing a shopping cart that has been removed from a business against the law. The punishment being considered is up to a year in jail and a $1,000 fine. Finally, in Olympia, the City Council recently revised its pedestrian sidewalk laws to prevent anyone from loitering within six feet of a building and to require street performers to get a city permit. In other words, if you aren't in the downtown to buy something, you don't need to be there.

> A new culture needs to form that seeks to unite civil liberties with economic equality.

Unlike other nations, which are taking steps to abolish homelessness, the United States is going in the other direction. It's waging a one-sided class war on its most vulnerable populations. In the process, it is stepping on some serious human rights: not only the right to housing, but also the right to food, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, the right to assemble, and the right to equality before the law. All this just goes to show that if you allow a government to take away one right, the rest will soon follow.

Steps we can take

The situation isn't completely hopeless. There are some ways for poverty activists to fight back. First and foremost is getting municipalities to rethink their priorities. The recent effort to push the homeless out of cities has got to stop. A new culture needs to form that seeks to unite civil liberties with economic equality. In some ways, this work has already begun. Due to the persistence of activists, the courts struck down the Nevada ordinance making it illegal to feed the homeless in public. Poverty activists and the ACLU in Massachusetts prevented the Worcester City Council from following through with its ridiculous two books per homeless person policy.

Next, people must put pressure on Congress to ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural, and Social Rights. In 1977, President Carter signed the treaty but since then the document has been in legal limbo because the Senate has failed to move forward. Ratification by the Senate would be more than a symbolic act. According to Article VI of the US Constitution, "all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land." That means that if the United States signs the treaty it becomes law, just as if it was any other part of the constitution. Like France, that move could provide the necessary moral and legal backdrop to make the right to housing a reality.

The next step is to add teeth to the law through legislative action. The Reaganomics of the 1980s gutted what little services there were for the homeless. The budget for Section 8 housing vouchers dropped from $74 billion in 1980 to $19 billion by 1989. In addition, President Clinton's "welfare reform" further devastated social service programs, and helped make families with children the fastest growing homeless population. Right now, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 remains the only piece of federal legislation that allocates funds directly to services for the homeless.

Lastly, America needs a new culture that fosters a radical class-consciousness. So far the right to housing – in all nations – has been interpreted as meaning governments must provide social services and a degree of public housing, and landlords must ensure their facilities are up to livable standards. While these are both good things, they have their limits. If we are truly interested in ensuring the right to housing for all people then we must also interpret this right to mean the abolishment of rent, establish residential management of units, and promote cooperative ownership of property. Essentially, the right to housing – like all the other rights – is intimately connected to the need for democracy. We will never have one, unless we ensure the other.

Marco Rosaire Rossi is a street outreach worker and member of the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions
Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *wip@zhonka.net* or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

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The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Mission Statement
"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause
We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues
Get your catalog of indexed *WIP*'s below. Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

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ON THE COVER: Guess who. Photo by Jeff Paterson/Courage to Resist (www.couragetoresist.org) ***See related stories on pages 5, 8 and 10.***

BACK COVER: Local residents greet a Stryker convoy with a soon-to-be traditional Oly welcome, May 24, 2006. Someone shot the photo, but we don't know who. ***See related stories on pages 1 and 7.***

WIP Schedule

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Stand with Lt. Ehren Watada
Monday, February 5
All day at the I-5 Exit 119 gate to the Ft. Lewis Army base.

Take action against the Iraq war and in support of Lt. Watada during his military court martial. There will be an all-day vigil, and other scheduled events. Supporters are arriving early that morning to display banners in support of Lt. Watada and hold vigil as the court martial begins. Schedule of events:

* 9:00 am Court Martial begins
* 11:30 am Rally with Iraq Veterans Against the War and spoken word youth artists
* 1:00 pm Street Theatre performance
* 3:00 pm Rally

Come early and stay all day!

There will be a space to get warm throughout the day at the Liberty Inn located at I-5 Exit 118. Shuttles to and from the demonstration location at I-5 Exit 119 will be provided by Friends and Family of Lt. Watada.

(See related articles on pages 5, 8 and 10)

WROC Night Out
Monday, February 5
First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE

Potluck at 5:30 pm, Legislative Training and Sign Painting from 6:00 to 8;00 pm to prepare for our legislative advocacy day and march to the Capitol on February 19th. On site childcare.

WROC and NOW Legislative Advocacy Day
Mon., Feb. 19 at the WROC Office, 701 Franklin Street SE
10:00 am, coffee and legislative briefing.

Lunch is at noon and march to the Capitol at 12:45 to join the Have A Heart For Kids Day Rally on the Capitol Steps. We will be meeting with legislators in the afternoon.

The legislative session has started and WROC wants to increase the TANF grant and stop full family sanction, as well as support actions to increase access to education, child care, health care and living wages, and regulate pay day loans. We need all of you to make this happen! Join us! We will have onsite childcare and can help with transportation.

Please let us know if you can make it. Contact Monica Peabody at (360)352-9716 or toll free (866)343-9716. Also visit www.wroc.org .

Protest Laws That Target The Poor
Two Thursdays: February 8th & 15th,
from noon-1:30 pm and 4:30-6:30pm
On 4th & Franklin and 5th & Capitol

Help defy the law in order to up-hold justice. The City of Olympia's new amendments to the Pedestrian Interference Ordinance and new busking permits are unjust laws that target Olympia's homeless and street populations. In solidarity and community, come "sit-out" with us on the sidewalk and ask for spare change to benefit Olympia's Poor People's Union.

Ralph's/Bayview Picket Dates
Sat., Feb. 10, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm outside of Ralph's, 1908 4th Avenue East.
Sat., Feb. 24, at Bayview, 516 4th Avenue West from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm

Please join us in picketing Ralph's and Bayview to remind the community that the boycott is continuing until Ralph's stocks Plan B emergency contraception. Signs will be available at the picket, but you're also welcome to bring your own.

Constitution in Crisis: The Case for Impeachment
A Town Hall Meeting
Tuesday, February 20, at 7:00 pm
Washington Center for Performing Arts

Three special speakers, Elizabeth de la Vega, David Lindorff and Ray McGovern, will present their perspectives and engage in a panel discussion as part of the event. The Citizens' Movement to Impeach Bush/Cheney formed last July and within three months gathered over 2,000 signatures calling for an impeachment investigation. The group has focused on four impeachable offenses: justifying the war in Iraq using fraudulent evidence; dismissing civil liberties and torturing prisoners in violation of the Constitution; performing illegal wiretapping of citizens; and refusing to obey more than 700 laws by using "signing statements." The group believes that citizens have both a right and a responsibility to question the actions of any president or high-level officials when they appear to be violating the Constitution. Free and open to all. Doors open at 6:00 pm.

For more information: impeachbush@riseup.net .

(See page 6 for related article.)

Left to Die: Causeway Concentration Camp
Friday, March 2, 7:00 pm
Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation Sanctuary
2200 East End Street NW—on the westside

Left to Die: Causeway Concentration Camp is a documentary vividly depicting the horrific experiences of thousands of New Orleans residents who survived the hurricane, were taken to a freeway interchange, and penned in open air inside of military barricades for days under extreme weather conditions. This event is sponsored by the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Social Justice Committee and the Alliance for Democracy, South Puget Sound Chapter. We show movies on Anti-War, Corporate Power and Consumerism with a Conscience on the FIRST Friday of EACH month at the Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation sanctuary. To find out more, visit www.sounddemocracy.org and www.olyuu.org.

Free Event. $5-$25 donation appreciated. For more info, contact Jacqui at 360-236-9684 or jacquiAFD@comcast.net or Howard at 790-4020 or socialjustice@olyuu.org

Folk Singer Tom Rawson Performs
A Benefit for the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation
Sat., Mar. 3, at 7:30 pm at Plenty! Restaurant at the corner of 4th and Columbia in downtown Olympia.

Tom Rawson is a banjo-playing, crowd-delighting folksinger who has charmed and invigorated audiences throughout the Pacific Northwest with his infectious wit, energy and songs that "you just can't resist singing along with."

Admission is based on a sliding scale donation of $10-$25 (self-determined.). Your ticket will entitle you to a 20% discount for dinner at Plenty! on the night of the show only. Light refreshments will be served during intermission. Tickets must be bought in advance. You may buy them either from Rainy Day Records, 301 5th Ave SE, Olympia, or from the Olympia FOR. To buy tickets by mail, please send checks payable to Olympia FOR to 5015 15th Avenue SE, Lacey, WA 98503-2723. For complete details call Glen Anderson at (360) 491-9093.

Class "From Waste to Wonderful!"
Sunday, March 4, 6.30–8:30 pm
Olympia Community Free School, 610 Columbia St.

We learn how to ferment kitchen waste with Bokashi and create nutrient rich compost for your garden or pots. Bokashi is fermented wheat bran, used as a potent compost starter. We will learn how to make Bokashi and get a visual how to Ferment kitchen waste without any odor, including meat and protein items like meat and even grease and fat. Bokashi also tremendously speeds up the composting process – down to only a couple of weeks.

Facilitator: Erika Fehr. Class fee: donations are appreciated. Limited space, call early for reservation.

For more information contact Erika at 360-894-6819.

Stop the War!
During the week of the four-year anniversary of the US invasion on Iraq, there will be multiple opportunities in Olympia for citizens to join together and say ENOUGH! Save these dates:

Tues., Mar. 20: Rally and march on the state Capitol with focus on legislative action
Thurs., Mar. 22: Actions targeting military recruitment centers
Sat., Mar. 24: Huge rally/festival/march

These and other activities, in the early stages of planning, are being organized by the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace (OMJP) in coordination with other local peace and justice groups. Mark these dates on your calendar and stay tuned for details.

For more information about OMJP visit www.omjp.org.

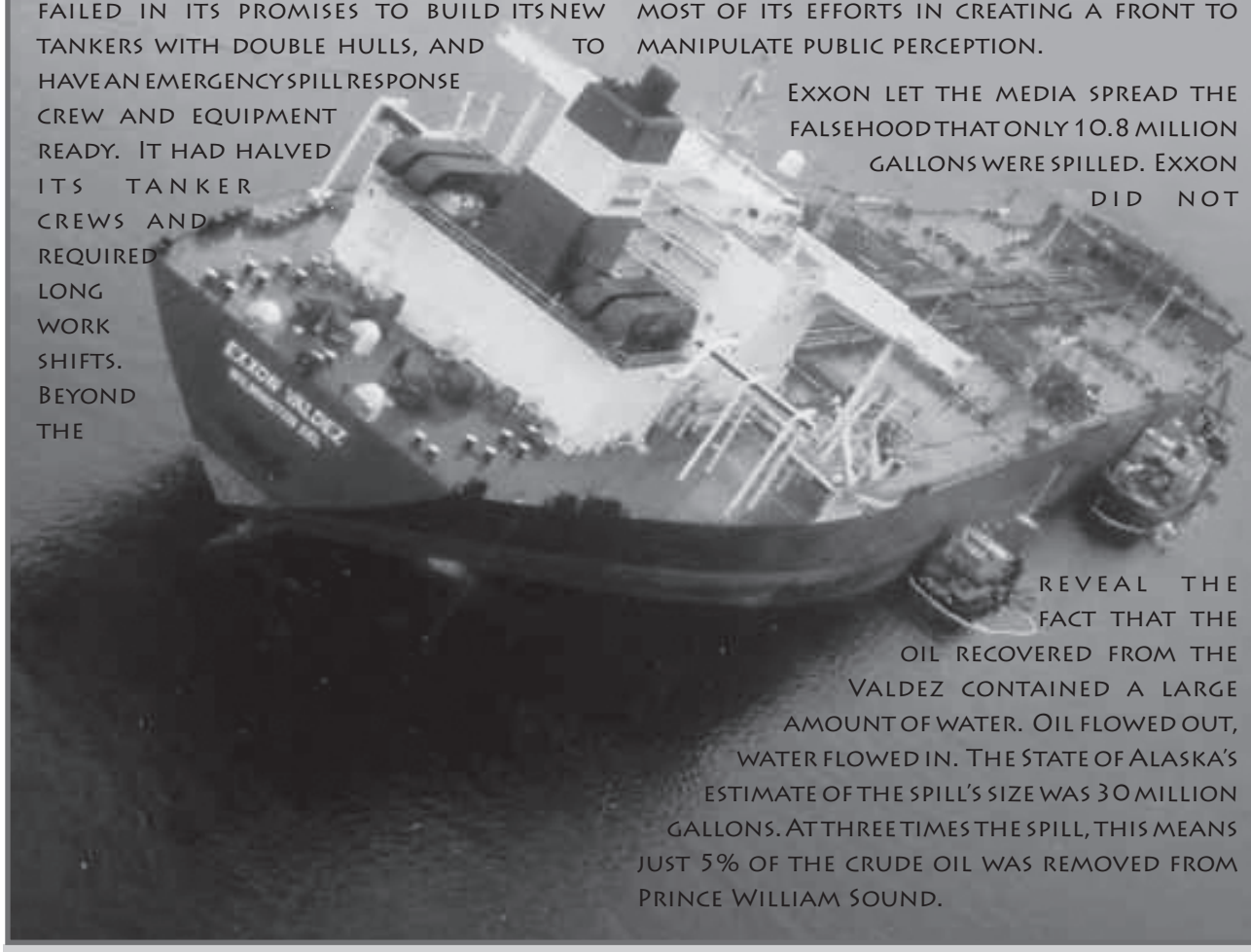
!Raccoon Radio!
Mondays at 1pm on **Free Radio Olympia** (98.5 FM)
Wednesdays at 8pm on **KOWA** (106.5 FM)

A weekly, Northwest social justice audio zine is now airing on Free Radio Olympia (frolympia.org) and KOWA. **!Raccoon Radio!** is produced locally and much of the content is Olympia based, covering culture, politics, music and more. If you would like your group or music featured on !Raccoon Radio!, or if you know of any events or stories we should cover, email raccoonsrock@gmail.com .

Centralia Square
Antique Mall
Restaurant
3 Floors to Explore
Open 7 days 10-5
South on Interstate 5
Off at Exit 82 (Factory Outlets)
East on Harrison, Right on Pearl
201 S. Pearl (& Locust)
facing Washington Park
www.MyAntiqueMall.com

February 2007

If Exxon Mobil was a real person
It would hang from a rope



When the Exxon Valdez oil spill occurred, Exxon had no strategies prepared, no massive clean-up methods tested. It failed in its promises to build its new tankers with double hulls, and to have an emergency spill response crew and equipment ready. It had halved its tanker crews and required long work shifts. Beyond the obvious error of employing a drinking captain, the entire situation was set for him to fail. What was Exxon's response? It placed most of its efforts in creating a front to manipulate public perception.

Exxon let the media spread the falsehood that only 10.8 million gallons were spilled. Exxon did not reveal the fact that the oil recovered from the Valdez contained a large amount of water. Oil flowed out, water flowed in. The State of Alaska's estimate of the spill's size was 30 million gallons. At three times the spill, this means just 5% of the crude oil was removed from Prince William Sound.

The Thousands that came to help in the clean-up ending up doing little more than putting their health in jeopardy. The 9,000+ who worked cleaning up the oil immediately became ill. They complained of headaches, sore throats, coughing, and nausea. Exxon said they just had the flu (for six months). Exxon didn't care. The workers real purpose was to give great photo ops. Exxon even told workers the crude was "safe enough to put on their pancakes." Remember all those beaches that were steam cleaned, killing anything that managed to survive? The winter storms put the oil right back.

In 1994 an Alaska jury awarded 32,000, whose lives and livelihoods have been disrupted, $5 billion. Twelve years later, the US Appeals Court lowered it to $2.5 billion. The court explained that Exxon hadn't intentionally targeted the oil spill at the Alaskans. Was that good enough for Exxon? Of course not, Exxon immediately appealed. It feels no remorse, no sense of responsibility. Screw the fish and the fishermen. It's out to make a buck anyway it can. Corporate criminal insanity is legal and insatiable. The only word that can make it cower is nationalization.

Sources: Dr. Riki Ott, Sound truth and corporate myths; Natalie Phillips, Anchorage Daily News; Carl Tobias, Christmas for Exxon; Kim Murphy, LA Times.

Photo: Richard D. Nagel

On January 9, 2007 President Bush lifted the moratorium on oil and gas leasing in Alaska's "salmon-rich waters of Bristol Bay, one of the world's most productive marine systems for fish, marine mammals and migratory birds."

1

2006: To pay for Iraq War, Congress cuts 12 billion from student loan programs/ substantially raises interest rates

2

2006: Hugo Chavez announces expulsion of naval attaché John Correa at the US Embassy for spying

3

2006: State Dept blocks 2 gay-rights groups from UN panel due to concern over potential support for pedophilia

4

1998: Bill Gates gets cream pie in Belgium
2006: Coretta Scott King lies in state at GA's Capitol Rotunda

5

2006: Yemeni officials confirm man considered mastermind of the USS Cole bombing escaped from a Yemeni prison

6

2006: Bush sends budget to Congress that slashes money from 2/3 of federal agencies, boosts military 6.9%

7

2006: Mitchell Rupe, murderer of two Tumwater State Bank tellers, dies of liver disease at Walla Walla

8

2003: Polls by CBS/ Newsweek claim seven in ten Americans support military action against Iraq

9

2006: Scooter Libby testifies superiors told him to leak highly sensitive information to reporters

10

2006: Mike Brown testifies White House knew of levee breaches the day Katrina hit, not the day after

11

2006: VP Cheney shoots 78-year-old millionaire attorney Harry Whittington with a shotgun

12

2006: House Katrina investigation cites unheeded warnings, poor planning, apathy from White House

13

2006: NY Times reveals Bush's budget bill allows companies to pump oil/gas from fed lands for 5 years free

14

2006: Haitian TV reports 1000s of ballots from Feb 7 Haitian pres. election found in Haiti garbage dump

15

2006: Iraq's Interior Ministry launches investigation into claims of a police death squad operating in Iraq

16

2006: US military spokesman reports discovery of a death squad operating within Iraq's Interior Ministry

17

2006: Supreme Court to rehear whistleblower case tie vote; Bush wants it harder for claims of retaliation

18

1970: "Chicago Seven" not guilty of conspiring to incite riot during 1968 Democratic National Convention

19

1942: Roosevelt signs Ex. Order 9066, authorizing exclusion of suspect persons from war zones by the military

20

2003: The Pentagon announces it is sending 3,000 troops to fight Muslim groups in the Philippines

21

1965: NY: Malcolm X is slain as he prepares to address audience
2001: Proctor & Gamble and Coke become one

22

2006: 25 million+ Americans turned to food banks, soup kitchens, shelters for meals in 2005

23

2006: Fed. survey: average income dropped 2%; top 10% of households net worth rose 6% from 2001 to 2004

24

2006: SD leg. passes law banning abortions except to save life of mother; no exceptions for rape or incest

25

2003: Hans Blix says Iraq is cooperating; Bush says Saddam trying to "fool the world" again

26

1965: Jimmie Lee Jackson, civil rights activist, dies of injuries inflicted by officers in Marion, Alabama

27

1995: Claims of sexual harassment/gender discrimination in OPD prompt city to hire attorney to investigate

28

2006: Iraq War Vet survey reveals more than 1/3 seek help for mental problems; twice the Afghanistan war #s

...nobody has studied the effects of the cleanup on workers. Internal company memos and government reports show Exxon rebuffed efforts by the health officials who tried. And to this day, only Exxon has the detailed medical records that could be used for epidemiological studies.

Natalie Phillips, Anchorage Daily News, 1999

Unbreakable dignity:

Report from the Zapatista International Encounter

story and photos by Rochelle Gause

Prior to the Zapatista uprising, for generations, the 900,000 indigenous people of Chiapas have lived in oblivion. From the perspective of the global economy, being neither large consumers or producers, they have been ignored and simply in the way. The endless appetite of the global economy has resulted in, according to Subcomandante Marcos (leader of the Zapatista Army), "the destruction of our land, our culture, our collective way of working, the destruction of our women, the lack of appreciation for our elders, and the merchandising of our youth. All of this, including the lack of maintenance of our educational system and the social security system is for the benefit of the grand capital extranjero [foreigner]."

On New Years Day 1994, the first day NAFTA took effect, the Zapatista National Liberation Army rose up and took over municipalities throughout Chiapas, birthing a movement which today continues not only to resist the theft of their resources but is also creating alternative autonomous governing bodies, schools, clinics, cooperatives and means of communication. On December 29 to January 2 the Zapatistas invited internationals from around the world to come together for an Encounter between the Zapatistas and the people of the World. The invitation stated "At this encounter the Zapatista communities will speak on the experiences we have had these past years with our autonomous governments; the challenges and problems that we have faced constructing this anti-capitalist project and we will try to, with humility and respect, to respond, speak and exchange, and above all, share our errors and stumbling, and also our modest achievements."

Haves and the have nots

The gathering took place in Oventic, one of the five caracoles (municipal seats) of the 32 Zapatista municipalities. On the way to the gathering, driving through the rural villages one can clearly see that very little money is making it to these communities. Federal and state government policies have benefited the foreign investors that exploit resource rich Chiapas and in turn line the pockets of the politicians and Mexican elite. With this setup, the indigenous people are losing land and many have been forced to migrate to the North, relocate to the urban centers or work on large agribusiness farms to provide low wage labor. Racism from the government is also clearly at work in Chiapas as shown in the poverty statistics. In a community where the indigenous population is less than 10 percent, 18 percent of the people are at or below the poverty line; for municipalities where the indigenous population is between 10 and 40 percent, 46 percent of the people are poor; and for those where the indigenous make up more than 70 percent of the population, over 80 percent are poor. The majority of the Zapatistas are Mayan Indians who live in wood slat and mud houses with dirt floors and do not have running water even though Chiapas provides close to 90% of the water consumed by the rest of Mexico.

> The majority of the Zapatistas are Mayan Indians who live in wood slat and mud houses with dirt floors and do not have running water even though Chiapas provides close to 90% of the water consumed by the rest of Mexico.

Encounter begins

Recognizing the reality most of the Zapatistas live in it is clear where the fuel came from to ignite this struggle, and yet with access to so few resources it is hard to imagine what alternatives they could be capable of creating. On the first day of the encounter thousands of Zapatistas who attended the conference set up stick structures covered in black plastic sheeting to sleep in for the duration of the encounter. In sharp contrast, the 2,000 internationals from 44 countries began to set up fancy tents. The structure of the encounter included a series of workshops providing updates on the progress of the autonomous governments, schools, health care systems, and cooperatives in each caracol as well as the struggles for land and for equality for women. I could feel such strong unity and pride in the Zapatistas who attended the encounter and it was an incredible experience to sit with them as the leaders they selected laid out their accomplishments throughout the workshops.

> As they establish stronger and stronger concrete alternatives their threat to the system grows.

The tactics of the Zapatistas have been extremely diverse throughout the thirteen year struggle from the initial armed uprising and government negotiations to the creation of the autonomous communities. The Mexican government response has been fairly consistent and limited to the use of force and intimidation mixed with rhetoric and promises never fulfilled. Even within this climate, much has been accomplished as in achieving autonomy as highlighted by the workshops. As one of the representatives explained "Because we can not change the world we struggle so that the world will not change us." Reports from three of the workshops are included below.

Autonomous education

From the internationally recognized health clinics to the primary and secondary schools, many of the communities are receiving services they never received from the government, often with support of NGOs and internationals. The Zapatista educational promoters, who are chosen by their communities to develop schools and train teachers from within the community, explained that the government schools their children used to attend were staffed mostly by teachers from the city who spoke only Spanish. "The government schools discriminated against the indigenous culture, language and traditions of our youth. They did not respond to our realities in the villages. They prepared our kids for the city, not to stay in our communities." Many parents decided to pull their students out of the government schools with the hopes of creating autonomous schools that "teach liberation, not domination" and "the value of being not having." Schools have been constructed in all five of the caracoles and many recently celebrated the graduation of their first class. Although the teachers are not paid, the community provides them with food. Each region also expressed a lack of resources to train future promoters and to build new schools. Their eyes lit up as they shared the largest dream of one day establishing an autonomous university.

Autonomous Governments

The representatives of the caracoles are selected through their community for a three year term. They can not run again to give all opportunity for leadership and to prevent people from becoming disconnected from the community and power hungry. They too do not receive payment but the community also provides them with food. Initially when the government councils were first created they were male dominated but today there are six women and seven men. Although clearly they have the capacity to govern themselves, the representatives explained that they have faced many challenges with few resources and villages with great need. The leaders stressed the huge contrast between themselves and the bad governments, those who run the state and country. For example, unlike the corrupt justice system throughout Mexico, the caracol representatives deal with conflicts by first attempting to find a solution through dialogue and compromise and if no compromise is reached the one who is found wrong must complete work to benefit the community, like the construction of a bridge. Repeatedly the representatives stressed that they "lead by obeying" and "propose not impose" with "humility and no self promotion."

Struggle for land

Due to armed uprising in 1994 many wealthy landowners abandoned their land. The Zapatistas have reclaimed much of this land to work collectively to sustain their communities. "The land belongs to those who work it" and "to sell the land, would be to sell our mother." Each region faces different struggles over land. The threat of losing land remains strong and paramilitary activity continues with intimidation and even the murder of Zapatista community members. Currently in the Aguazul region the government is attempting to force a Zapatista community off the land by the creation of an ecotourist destination, which will also allow the government to exploit water reserves and other resources. Also the implementation of neoliberal pro-

▸ **Dignity** continued on next page

Reporter's rights

by Sarah Olson

On Jan. 29, the Army dropped two charges of "conduct unbecoming of an officer" in the court-martial of 1st Lt. Ehren Watada. The dismissal means Watada now could face a maximum of four years in prison if convicted instead of six. It also means two reporters, including Sarah Olson, subpoenaed to testify for the prosecution regarding statements Watada made in interviews with them, will not be called.

Lieutenant Ehren Watada continues to report for duty at Fort Lewis in the state of Washington while awaiting a February court-martial on one charge of "missing movement" and [two] charges of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." The latter four charges are based entirely on political speech.

The US Army cobbled together portions of my May 2006 interview with Lieutenant Watada and these statements comprised the foundation of one charge of conduct unbecoming an officer. To substantiate this alleged crime, the Army subpoenaed me to testify on behalf of their prosecution.

When the military chooses to prosecute a soldier for expressing dissenting political positions to a member of the press, that journalist is unwittingly and inevitably forced into the middle of the conflict.

Among multiple issues this raises, it begs one central question: Doesn't it fly in the face of the First Amendment to compel a journalist to participate in a government prosecution against a source, particularly in matters related to personal political speech?

It is my job as a professional journalist to report the news, not to act as the eyes and ears of the government. I am repelled by this approach that jeopardizes my credibility and seeks to compel my participation in muting public speech and dissenting personal opinion.

What could be more hostile to the idea of a free press than a journalist participating in the suppression of newsworthy speech?

When journalists are subpoenaed to confirm the veracity of their reporting, they typically agree to this limited request. What makes this case different is that the thing in question is the political nature of Lieutenant Watada's speech.

As a journalist, I cannot support or criticize the thoughts of an interview subject. My job is to record those thoughts accurately and provide a public forum for debate. If the Army succeeds in turning me into an arm of their investigation, it will chill not only press freedom but also free speech.

It seems clear that the US Army is attempting to redefine the parameters of acceptable speech and to classify dissent as a punishable offense. Subpoenaing journalists in this case unequivocally sends the message that dissent is neither tolerated nor permitted. Utilize your constitutionally guaranteed speech rights and go to prison. What rational soldier would agree to speak with me or any other member of the media if jail was a likely result?

When the press cannot or does not reflect the vibrant and varied perspectives within our society, it is reduced to a simple transcriber of government press releases.

I stand firmly by a conviction I share with many: a member of the press should never be placed in the position of aiding a government prosecution of political speech.

You may ask: Do I want to be sent to prison by the US Army for not cooperating with their prosecution of Lieutenant Watada? My answer: Absolutely not. You may also ask: Would I rather contribute to the prosecution of a news source for sharing newsworthy perspectives on an affair of national concern? That is the question I wholly object to having before me in the first place.

Sarah Olson is an independent journalist and radio producer based in Oakland, CA. She can be reached at solson75@yahoo.com.

Journalist Sarah Olson, on assignment for the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., interviews war resister Pablo Paredes in Los Angeles, March 2006. Photo by Yasemin Kasim.

Tribunal challenges Iraq war with truth

In an unprecedented two-day Citizens' Hearing held over the weekend, more than 600 citizens joined a distinguished tribunal panel in listening to testimony about the legality of the US invasion of Iraq.

The Hearing was convened to present evidence that Lt. Ehren Watada would have presented in his February 5 court martial on the question that the military ruled barred from entry last week – the question of the Iraq War's legality.

Lt. Watada has repeatedly asserted that because the Iraq War is illegal, it is his duty to refuse orders to deploy. He is the Army's first commissioned officer to take such a stand. Panel Chair David Krieger asserted: "If Lt. Watada cannot get a full hearing about the war's legality in a military trial, then his case should at least be presented in the court of public opinion. This Citizens' Hearing was about giving Lt. Watada's position equal time."

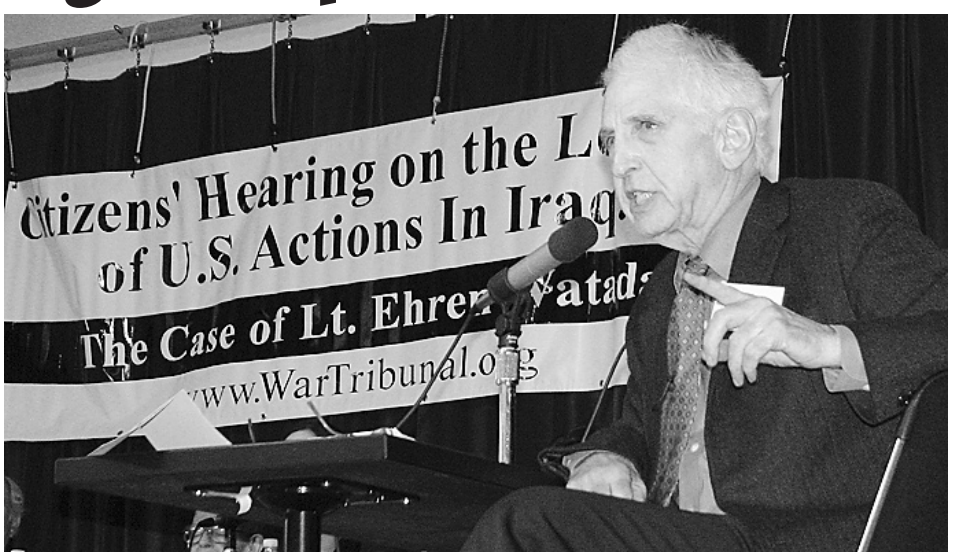
The format of the Citizens' Hearing (convened at The Evergreen State College Tacoma campus) resembled that of a congressional hearing. A panel of citizens heard the testimony, examined witnesses, and before the court martial will issue a fact-finding report that will be posted at www.wartribunal.org .

The panel focused on the legality of the war, whether the invasion of Iraq constituted a "crime against peace," whether the military occupation of Iraq constitutes a "crime against humanity," and whether individual soldiers have an obligation or duty to refuse unlawful orders that may lead to "war crimes."

Many of those who testified, most of whom would have been called to testify at the court martial if the judge had allowed that evidence, agreed that Lt. Ehren Watada had not only the right to refuse to deploy to Iraq in an illegal war, but had a duty to do so.

Whether violations of the Nuremberg Principles or the US Constitution, some testifiers asserted that Lt. Watada should be recognized for his courage rather than undergoing a Court Martial. Panelist Rich Moniak from Juneau, Alaska, whose son served in Iraq and Afghanistan, said during the deliberation: "The testimony presented to me highlighted how this war has failed the Iraqi people and placed our soldiers at risk of being accessories to war crimes."

Law professors Benjamin G. Davis and Richard Falk agreed that there are clear legal grounds on which the war is illegal. Falk, citing the sections of the US Army Field Manual, emphasized that international law is applicable to the behavior of US soldiers in a times of war and that soldiers have the duty to refuse unlawful commands. Davis sharply criticized the decision of the military judge to not hear Watada's full defense, stating that Americans have a right to have their defense heard.



Daniel Ellsberg, former military analyst testifies on illegality of Iraq war.
Photo by Lori Hurlebaus/CouragetoResist.org .

The most compelling testimony came from former members of the US military, including five veterans of Iraq. According to Ann Wright, a former Army Colonel and US diplomat who served three and a half decades for the US government, Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Powell created the preconditions that led to torture. She added: "We must ensure that members of the US military are not put in the position of being ordered to carry out crimes against humanity."

Darrell Anderson, who received a Purple Heart for his service in Iraq, talked about a situation he was involved in when orders were issued to "shoot everyone" regardless of whether they were civilians, including children. He stated that they used, what he called, "excessive force." He said: "I realize it was my duty as a soldier to refuse this illegal war."

According to Chanan Suarez-Diaz – who also received a Purple Heart for his service in Iraq – the psyched up emotions among the troops resulted in US soldiers taking "trophies" of brain matter from Iraqis they killed and putting such in their refrigerators on base.

Immediately following the closing statements, the panel retired to discuss the testimony, consulting the US Army Field Manual and the Nuremberg Principles. They discussed the testimony until well into the night. Panelist Staughton Lynd, an attorney who holds a PhD in history from Columbia University, said: "The overpowering testimony from Iraq veterans highlighted the conditions that soldiers on the ground are facing."

Russell McNutt, a veteran of three wars: World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, stated: "I was exposed to a lot of knowledge. The soldiers who served in Iraq that we heard from were facing the dirty end of war. In urban warfare there are no definite boundaries, in different instances the enemy can be in front of you or behind your back. There is a lot of tension about who is a civilian and who is an insurgent. Under those circumstances, instantaneous decisions must be made in responding to threats. Time to exercise discretion is limited, but every effort should be made to ensure innocent bystanders are not injured through the use of deadly force."

Tribunal organizer Zoltan Grossman commented: "It is the command structure, rather than individual soldiers, that puts enlisted personnel in the position where they feel they have to commit war crimes to survive. The command structure is ultimately responsible for war crimes or crimes against humanity. For example, testimony indicated that the dehumanization of Arabs through the use of racial slurs comes from a systematic training process, not only from individual soldiers' prejudices or fears."

Elizabeth Falzone, whose cousin was killed while serving in Iraq, reflected: "The Citizens' Hearing provided a real venue for citizens to hear from soldiers who are returning from Iraq. Hearing from them and more from family members is especially important with the "surge", and the repeat deployments that we're seeing."

The Citizens' Hearing and the distinguished panel will release the full report prior to Lt. Watada's court martial, including the panel's final statement and excerpts from the testimony. There are now video and audio clips on the web site: *www.wartribunal.org*, and more will be available.

Information about Lt. Ehren Watada's case, his February 5th Court Martial and the mobilization leading up to it, is at *www.thankyoult.org* .

▸ **Dignity** continued from page 4

grams by the government, such as PROCEDE, also work to destroy the possibility of collectively worked lands. "Today we are living a global offense of exploitation, of being kicked off our lands, and of a development of politics that will destroy us. The only way to confront this is by struggling for the impossible, or in other words, the necessary," explains Sergio Rodriguez from the Zapatista Rebeldía magazine. The lands that they have recuperated are farmed organically without the use of genetically modified seed. Agro-ecology promoters have recently been selected to educate themselves and then their community on sustainability practices.

Life of resistance

On January 1 at close to 2 am in the morning, Subcomandante Marcos and many members of the Zapatista National Liberation Army arrived to celebrate the thirteenth anniversary of the rebellion. The cultural event lasted for hours with music and dance. In the indigenous language of Tzotzil, Marcos stated, "What we have learned on the road of our struggle is that we could not win unless we united with the people who struggle everywhere." The Zapatistas need the support of internationals to achieve their goals in the face of a system that continuously tries to eliminate them. As they establish stronger and stronger concrete alternatives their threat to the system grows. The eyes of internationals are critical in preventing the human rights abuses the Mexican government is notorious for. We have a long way to go to cross the cultural barriers necessary to provide the ultimate in solidarity, but on the last night looking through the mist out on to the basketball court where thousands of internationals and Zapatistas were dancing together to traditional music, it felt possible. As I watched the dancers, many in their early twenties, I realized that the rebellion began for many of these Zapatistas when they were less than ten years old; they have truly lived a life of resistance. Throughout the length of the encounter I was struck by their humble spirit mixed with the depth of their accomplishments, not only the autonomous governments, schools, clinics, radio stations, coffee and craft collectives but also the incredible wealth of beauty in their vision and their unity.

Rochelle Gause, an Olympia activist, currently resides in Chiapas after spending time in Oaxaca during the uprising. She has also served as a delegate with the Olympia–Rafah Sister City Project.

"Leave now or you will die like a dog."

Wrapped around a bullet

by Kathy Kelly

An Iraqi friend whom I've known for ten years looked worn and very weary yesterday when he came to visit me in my apartment here in Amman, Jordan. He hadn't slept the night before because he'd been on the phone with his wife who, throughout the night, was terrified by crossfire taking place over the Iraqi village where she stays with their four small children. My friend longs to soothe and protect his wife and kids. But now he lives apart from them, in another country.

His life was completely changed when a piece of paper was tossed into his kitchen in Baghdad. It read: "Leave now or you will die like a dog." Many Iraqis have been receiving notes like this. This piece of paper was sent to him with a bit of extra emphasis. It was wrapped around a bullet.

Weeks later, assailants killed his younger brother who was returning home from University studies. My friend moved his family to a village outside Baghdad and then ran for his life.

Here in Amman, Jordan, where the UN cites a figure of 700,000 Iraqis who have fled their country, he feels trapped. Like other Iraqis, he lives without legal protections: he is not allowed to work, he is unable to obtain proper documentation to settle here, and each Embassy to which he has applied for resettlement has given him the cold shoulder. He may walk the sunburst streets of Amman, ride in taxis, eat in kabob shops, but he lives a shadowy, underground existence. Every day, Iraqis in Jordan are arrested (for working, for overstaying their visas, etc.) and deported. This, too, is a death threat of sorts. Meanwhile, in Iraq, his family lives in a battlefield, and who knows what tomorrow will bring?

Still, my friend's case is hardly unique. Relative to other stories we've heard, he is somewhat fortunate. He was not captured and tortured before fleeing Iraq. His wife has not been raped. His children are still alive.

Anyone listening to my friend's experience of loss and tragedy would surely understand his feelings of cynicism, even bitterness, when he thinks about how the Bush Administration has sold this ongoing war. Turn the page back to May of 2006, when sectarian violence had already begun to consume Iraq, and here is how President Bush depicted what the US had done for Iraq, following Iraqi elections:

"For the people across the broader Middle East, a free Iraq will be an inspiration. [Iraqis] have proved that the desire for liberty in the heart of the Middle East is for real. They have shown diverse people can come together and work out their differences. Years from now, people will look back on the formation of a unity government in Iraq as a decisive moment in the story of liberty, a moment when freedom gained a firm foothold in the Middle East and the forces of terror began their long retreat."

The speechwriter who equipped President Bush with these lines should be burning with shame. President Bush indulged in a fantasy at a time when thousands of Iraqi civilians were fleeing abroad, every month, to escape worsening violence and tens of thousands more were being displaced internally, nearly half a million in the last ten months, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

In reality, there were no encouraging signs of the US troop presence stabilizing the situation in Iraq. Today, even President Bush acknowledges that news from Iraq is "unsettling," as daily headlines report battles, kidnappings, torture, and murder.

Nevertheless, the President will likely ask the Congress to approve 97.7 billion dollars in supplemental spending for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which will be in addition to the Pentagon's $560 billion dollar budget. According to some estimates, US taxpayers will pay close to 2 trillion dollars for a doomed war in Iraq.

A New York Times article called "Heady Days for Makers of Weapons" notes that military contractors are profiting more than ever as Pentagon spending has reached record levels. Nobody expects the Democrats, now in charge of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees, to interfere with the lucrative deal making. With an eye toward 2008 elections, Democrats want to establish their cooperation with the most powerful lobby on Capitol Hill, the "defense" lobby. "I think the Democrats will be on good behavior," commented an analyst with JSA Securities in Newport, R.I., "...as long as the war continues and we have 150,000 troops in Iraq." (NYT, December 26, 2006).

Ultimately, this means that US taxpayers will have to be "on good behavior" and pouring billions more dollars into weapons-making giants like Lockheed, Boeing, Raytheon, and General Dynamics. No one asks us to behave accountably on behalf of the 100,000 Iraqi refugees who, every month, according to U.N. estimates, flee from Iraq. We have yet to see a proposal for a generous package of reparations intended to help rebuild Iraq's shattered infrastructure.

The US should never cut and run away from our responsibility to pay very generously for reparations in Iraq. We should be committed to finding the most viable, practical means to help Iraqis rebuild their shattered infrastructure. We should seek negotiations with Iraq's neighbors, not for purposes of being the "kingmaker" and deciding which country will emerge as the strongest, but rather for purposes of seeking an end to any foreign support for armed struggle within Iraq.

There are no simple solutions. Problems with corruption within Iraqi governing structures, retaliatory violence fueling a civil war, and the lack of protection for any non-governmental involvement in distributing support for reconstruction seem nearly insurmountable. But this doesn't lessen the US responsibility to direct US wealth, ingenuity, and productivity toward just reparations for the enormous suffering our invasion and occupation has caused. Every effort should be made, within the US, to build public support for a US financial commitment to help rebuild Iraq. Equivalent effort should be made to stop stuffing the portfolios of major weapons manufacturers.

The US should never cut and run from our responsibility to pay very generously for reparations in Iraq.

Lawmakers should have at least enough integrity to acknowledge that current plans to support ongoing troop presence in Iraq at a cost of billions of dollars show very little promise for lessening the violence, displacement and signs of civil war that afflict Iraqis today.

Beginning in February 2007, when lawmakers will discuss the Administration's proposed supplemental budget, Voices for Creative Nonviolence will launch "the Occupation Project." (see www.vcnv.org)

Although we have paltry financial means compared to the weapons makers who wield so much influence on Capitol Hill, we do have resources. We have our bodies. We have our determination. We have our compassion for Iraqi people and for US soldiers. We have our concern for future generations who will not only have to live with the consequences of this violence, but who will also live on a planet spoiled by global warming, in no small part because we spent our resources on war instead of on developing clean energy sources. These are the grains of sand that will stop the cogs of war from turning.

Now is the time for seriously strategizing about the best ways, in our hometowns, to engage in sustained civil disobedience at the offices of elected representatives, demanding that they vote against the supplemental spending bill.

A polite refusal to leave an elected representative's office may entail some hours spent in jail. Some will receive minor misdemeanor charges from federal or local police, for "disorderly conduct," or "trespass" or "failure to comply." We'll prepare for a day in court; we'll discuss how to handle any fines imposed on us. These are slight inconveniences and discomforts when I think of Iraqi friends, so wearied by war, and of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and the thousands of Americans whose lives are forever altered by the cruelty and senselessness of war and of those who prolong it.

Much more grave is the risk of growing adjusted to a warlike culture that feeds the multi-billion dollar weapon industry. I shudder still, thinking of the note that landed in my friend's kitchen, ugly paper wrapping a tiny yet terrible weapon. Who pens such a letter? Who delivers it? Who authorizes these threats? What kind of organization thrives on sundering families, on death and torture, on driving whole societies into flight and chaos and despair? The answers are murky and unclear.

But we should all shudder with disgust at the clear fact that US budget priorities are more devoted to protecting the profits of arms peddlers and military contractors than to seeking a better future for Iraqis.

It's hard to put your foot down over something called a "supplemental spending bill" – over a piece of paper, a bit of writing that you didn't write yourself but are perhaps helping to deliver. My friend's life was ruined by such a piece of paper. Iraqis are leaving their homes in Iraq by the thousands every day, and prolonging this war will cause more to flee.

That's why many of us will be occupying our representatives' offices this winter. We don't want to help deliver a death threat to people all across Iraq. This bill, this message of continued US commitment to spending for war, isn't just a piece of paper to them.

It's a death threat, and it's wrapped around a bullet.

Printed with permission. Kathy Kelly is co-coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence and author of Other Lands Have Dreams. She can be reached at: kathy@vcnv.org

Why removing Bush and Cheney matters

by Gail Johnson

Many people know that Bush and Cheney engaged in a systematic media campaign to deceive the American people and Congress about the reasons to launch a preemptive war on Iraq. Many others recognize that the President has violated numerous laws by spying on citizens without a warrant, dismissing their rights accorded to them by the Bill of Rights, and promoting torture. Some are also concerned about the President's abuse of power by using unconstitutional "signing statements," in which he signs a bill into law but then states he does not have to obey it. These are impeachable offenses.

It is, therefore, curious that although few argue that Bush is innocent, many are willing to give him and his team the equivalent of a "get out of jail free" card. They offer a number of arguments opposing impeachment.

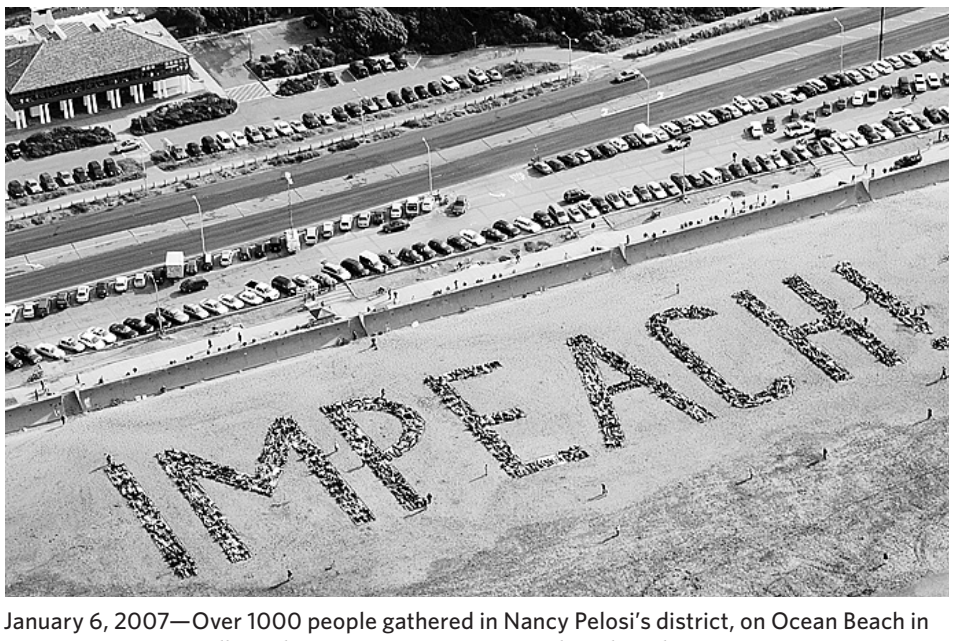
1. The President is fighting a "war on terror" and therefore has the authority to do whatever he feels is necessary as commander in chief. However, nothing in the Constitution supports this view. District Judge Anna Diggs Taylor, in ruling against the President's illegal spying on citizens, reaffirmed the limits of Presidential power, declaring, "There are no hereditary kings in America and no powers not created by the Constitution. So all 'inherent powers' must derive from that Constitution." US Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, a Reagan appointee, also dismissed this argument, succinctly stating, "A state of war is not a blank check for the President when it comes to the rights of the nation's citizens."

2. These illegal actions are a matter for the courts. While it is true that some individuals whose rights have been violated have turned to the courts for redress, the courts have no jurisdiction over a President who breaks the law because the Constitution gives Presidents immunity. The impeachment process is the only remedy available to the people to deal with a President who breaks the law.

3. Cheney will be in charge if Bush is removed. Cheney, as Bush's current handler, would actually have no more power. However, Cheney, like Bush, should be removed from office for using fraudulent information to scare the public into supporting a pre-emptive strike on Iraq. The U.N., the CIA and British Intelligence told Bush/Cheney that there were no weapons of mass destruction or any nuclear capability in Iraq, but they took to the airwaves anyway with soundbites like, "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud."

4. The invasion of Iraq is insufficient grounds for impeachment because Congress gave the President authority to wage war. Congress has not declared war since 1941. However, even if it had, it would have still been a violation of the U.N. Charter, which we approved as the supreme law of our country. We agreed not to use war to settle disputes unless there was an imminent threat requiring self-defense. There was no threat. The argument quickly changes at this point to say that other Presidents have waged illegal war. "Why should Bush be punished," ask Bush's defenders, "when other Presidents have gotten away with it?" That is like saying no one who commits murder should be punished because some people have gotten away with it.

5. Impeachment is a futile effort. It will take a two-thirds vote in the Senate, they point out, but the Democrats hold only a slim majority. While blind loyalty has marked the Republicans for most of the Bush presidency, times have changed. The arrogance of Bush/Cheney has alienated many Senators. Senator Chuck Hagel (R–NE) has recently criticized the President for riding roughshod over the Senate, stating, "This is not a monarchy." The public's low opinion of Bush/Cheney along with the 2006 election results gives Republicans permission to remove Bush/Cheney.



January 6, 2007—Over 1000 people gathered in Nancy Pelosi's district, on Ocean Beach in San Francisco, to spell out the message "IMPEACH!" Photo by John Montgomery.

▸ **Impeachment** continued on page 7

We must stand against the largest exporter of terror: the US Empire

by Drew Hendricks

Many people in our community oppose the war in Iraq. And while I often agree with my community on issues of war and peace, in this instance I disagree. I do not oppose the war in Iraq.

I don't think that the United States should have any troops stationed anywhere outside the United States. I'm against the Empire. But what those troops are doing in Iraq is not a war – it's an occupation. It's the colonial administration of another nation, and the suppression of the people of that nation. It's a war crime, and I oppose it. But the war isn't being fought by the US military. The war is being fought by the Iraqi people and their allies. I support their struggle to throw out the US military by whatever means they decide. Their struggle is mine as long as we oppose the same Empire.

The US Military is losing this war. They are concentrating their forces in the larger cities, and sheltering in their bases at night, and generally doing what armies historically have done to lose such conflicts. But if we keep in mind that the United States can lose this war, we need to also keep in mind that the US economic elites will still benefit from the consequences of this war on Iraq and its people. George W. Bush and the people who selected him are winning profits, even as the US military is losing the war. And these elites will continue to win even as the US Army withdraws from Iraq, just as they win when Vietnam's people work in US-owned factories, more than thirty years after their victory. They will win because Iraq is disintegrating.

> If we are more creative than our opponents in this struggle, we can win victory over war rather than victory over people

Iraq possesses a huge source of surface water, petroleum and technical expertise in the region, and was one of the most developed economies in the area prior to the 1991 war and subsequent sanctions regime. The second ground war since 2003 has only accelerated the trend toward dismantling Iraq's resources and disintegrating its political unity. Granted, this was an imperial unity to begin with – it was imposed during the 1920's by the British Empire. But that political unity was not ours to play with; it belongs to the people who live in that region. The resources we now "manage" for the benefit of a few were once used to house, educate, and feed a much wider segment of Iraqi society than they do now. And more to the point, the natural resources that are tied up by the war cannot be used for the economic development of any other country in the world, and the lack of stable production in Iraq raises petroleum prices worldwide – prices that are set in US dollars and support our currency by that trade. (Saddam Hussein had moved to trade Iraqi petroleum in Euros rather than dollars, and this was one of the reasons Iraq was attacked by the United States.)

The disintegration of Iraq removes, for the world's Oiligarchs, the threat of Iraqi oil serving the development needs of Iraq, and even more importantly, of China. To remove this threat, by removing the independence of oil suppliers over the disposition of their resources, is the true war aim of the US Empire. In this game, it is almost as important to see which region's resources are not available, as it is to see which regions are producing and for whom. (Somalia is a famously non-producing oil-rich region recently attacked by the US empire for beginning to get its region organized again after 12 years of chaos.)

The central question for the US peace movement – and it is yet to be seen that there is any such thing – is whether we will stand in solidarity against Empire, or hang separately once again. The question we must ask, and the question we must answer, is what we are advocating.

For many, opposition to this war is enough. We can proceed down a path of the least common denominator, and reap the least common reward – perhaps in another eight years. Or we can get to the root of the issue and work together to eliminate the world's largest exporter of terror.

Since the Vietnam War, which ended over 30 years ago, the United States has fought on every continent except Antarctica, and in at least 71 named conflicts.

Stryker convoy rolling through Olympia on Plum Street, May 2006. Photo by Sandy Mayes.

We can no longer continue to abide quietly in a country that is at war with the world. If we want peace, we must stop the United States military machine. We must reconsider the historical effectiveness of holding signs along the roads in achieving this. At the very least we should step into the roads with our signs – it's our land, after all – and block the convoys and trains of war machines that seek to use our Port. But this is not all we should consider.

It was not US demonstrators who stopped the US War on Vietnam. The largest anti-war demonstrations had all but ended by 1970, three years prior to the Paris Peace Accords and five years prior to the final collapse of the US-backed puppet regime of South Vietnam. It was not the tiny, sporadic terror campaign of the Weathermen that ended that war, either.

It was the Viet Minh (more commonly known in the US as the Viet Cong) who fought that war who finally made possible the limited defeat of the US military in 1973–1975. Few in the US stood in solidarity with the right of the people of Vietnam to stand up to their occupiers at the point of arms. But many soldiers for the United States – mostly conscripts – did stand in solidarity with their supposed enemies. More than 600, possibly as many as 2000, US military officers were killed by their own soldiers between 1968 and 1972. Thousands of US soldiers refused to go out on patrols. Tens of thousands more men refused to answer the draft. It was this resistance under arms – as well as the refusal to take up arms at all – that ended the Vietnam war, and it was our community of support that emboldened them to refuse service. But it took more than just pacifist tactics to make the whole resistance work.

If we want peace, we must insist on justice. But to get justice, we must stand shoulder to shoulder against those in our own society who seek to destroy or subjugate us all. We must use every tool in the toolbox, and consider carefully the effectiveness of any action we take.

We must stand in solidarity with the people of Iraq despite their tactics, despite their desperation, and withdraw our material support for the war on them and their region. We must support an alternative vision of our own resources and purpose as people in our own communities. And we must take our communities back from those who would dispose of them in endless war.

If we are more creative than our opponents in this struggle, we can win victory over war rather than victory over people. With enough people, we can do this nonviolently. But we cannot do this passively.

Drew Hendricks is a member of Olympia Copwatch, Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace and Port Militarization Resistance.

▸ **Impeachment** continued from page 6

6. Impeachment will be seen as partisan. The Democrats are afraid they will be seen as seeking partisan revenge. I see it differently. Everyone in Congress takes an oath to protect and defend the Constitution so this is not a partisan issue. The Democrats need more faith in the people. We do understand that impeachment is about preserving and protecting the Constitution. We expect the Democrats, and all of Congress, to honor their oath of office. Being more concerned about "how it will look for the Democrats in the next election," than about honoring their oath of office is truly partisanship run amok.

7. Impeachment will distract from the Democrats' agenda. Twenty Representatives (ten Democrats and ten Republicans) conduct the initial impeachment investigation. Given that there are 435 people in the House of Representatives, it is difficult to see why Congress would be unable to conduct business as usual. If the Committee does find substantial evidence of crimes, the full House would become involved. They will hear the results of that investigation and decide whether to pass articles of impeachment, which are like an indictment. If they pass articles of impeachment, the Senate will serve as the jury in the equivalent of a trial. If Bush and Cheney do not step down at this point, the House will present the case, Bush/Cheney will have legal representation, and the Chief Supreme Court Justice will preside. The process, however, will be swift. Representative John Conyers has already conducted hearings and issued a report in August 2006 with evidence needed for removal.

8. It will be a replay of the Clinton Impeachment. Unlike the Clinton impeachment process, the Bush/Cheney trial will not require millions of taxpayer dollars and many months of investigation. It will be swift because the evidence is overwhelming and undisputed. Experts Elizabeth de la Vega, David Lindorff, and Ray McGovern will make a case for impeachment at the town hall meeting in Olympia on February 20th (see side bar) by presenting the facts that are already known.

9. Removing Bush/Cheney will be bad for the country. The Orwellian spin machine has already started to reframe the Nixon impeachment as harmful to the country. However, impeachment does not harm us. Removing Bush/Cheney will restore the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, as the bedrock of our democracy and will heal the grievous harm done over the past six years. It will also restore our faith that a government by the people can peacefully remove a President and Vice President who have broken laws and moved our country dangerously close to a dictatorship. It will also send a signal to the world that democracy still exists here and that the actions of Bush/Cheney do not represent Americans.

10. This is a lame duck administration, so why create all the turmoil of an impeachment? (House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, among others, has made this argument). But unless Congress removes Bush and Cheney, every future President can claim that he/she has the right to lie to get us into war, spy on us for any reason without a warrant, arrest us for any reason and deny us due process, torture us, and refuse to follow any law passed by Congress. That is the precedent established by this administration. Impeachment and removal of Bush/Cheney is the only way to send the message to future Presidents that they will never get away with violating our rights. Impeachment is never off the table when a President is dismantling the Constitution and the rights of the citizens are in peril.

Gail Johnson is a member of Citizen's Movement to Impeach Bush/Cheney.

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SIR, IT'S A POLL OF IRAQI PEOPLE.

OUR MERCENARIES IN IRAQ

by Jeremy Scahill

As President Bush took the podium to deliver his State of the Union address Tuesday, there were five American families receiving news that has become all too common: Their loved ones had been killed in Iraq. But in this case, the slain were neither "civilians," as the news reports proclaimed, nor were they US soldiers. They were highly trained mercenaries deployed to Iraq by a secretive private military company based in North Carolina – Blackwater USA.

The company made headlines in early 2004 when four of its troops were ambushed and burned in the Sunni hotbed of Fallouja – two charred, lifeless bodies left to dangle for hours from a bridge. That incident marked a turning point in the war, sparked multiple US sieges of Fallouja and helped fuel the Iraqi resistance that haunts the occupation to this day.

Now, Blackwater is back in the news, providing a reminder of just how privatized the war has become. On Tuesday, one of the company's helicopters was brought down in one of Baghdad's most violent areas. The men who were killed were providing diplomatic security under Blackwater's $300-million State Department contract, which dates to 2003 and the company's initial no-bid contract to guard administrator L. Paul Bremer III in Iraq. Current US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, who is also protected by Blackwater, said he had gone to the morgue to view the men's bodies, asserting the circumstances of their deaths were unclear because of "the fog of war."

Bush made no mention of the downing of the helicopter during his State of the Union speech. But he did address the very issue that has made the war's privatization a linchpin of his Iraq policy – the need for more troops. The president called on Congress to authorize an increase of about 92,000 active-duty troops over the next five years. He then slipped in a mention of a major initiative that would represent a significant development in the US disaster response/reconstruction/war machine: a Civilian Reserve Corps.

"Such a corps would function much like our military Reserve. It would ease the burden on the armed forces by allowing us to hire civilians with critical skills to serve on missions abroad when America needs them," Bush declared. This is precisely what the administration has already done, largely behind the backs of the American people and with little congressional input, with its revolution in military affairs. Bush and his political allies are using taxpayer dollars to run an outsourcing laboratory. Iraq is its Frankenstein monster.

Already, private contractors constitute the second-largest "force" in Iraq. At last count, there were about 100,000 contractors in Iraq, of which 48,000 work as private soldiers, according to a Government Accountability Office report. These soldiers have operated with almost no oversight or effective legal constraints and are an undeclared expansion of the scope of the occupation. Many of these contractors make up to $1,000 a day, far more than active-duty soldiers. What's more, these forces are politically expedient, as contractor deaths go uncounted in the official toll.

The president's proposed Civilian Reserve Corps was not his idea alone. A privatized version of it was floated two years ago by Erik Prince, the secretive, mega-millionaire, conservative owner of Blackwater USA and a man who for years has served as the Pied Piper of a campaign to repackage mercenaries as legitimate forces. In early 2005, Prince – a major bankroller of the president and his allies – pitched the idea at a military conference of a "contractor brigade" to supplement the official military. "There's consternation in the [Pentagon] about increasing the permanent size of the Army," Prince declared. Officials "want to add 30,000 people, and they talked about costs of anywhere from $3.6 billion to $4 billion to do that. Well, by my math, that comes out to about $135,000 per soldier." He added: "We could do it certainly cheaper."

And Prince is not just a man with an idea; he is a man with his own army. Blackwater began in 1996 with a private military training camp "to fulfill the anticipated demand for government outsourcing." Today, its contacts run from deep inside the military and intelligence agencies to the upper echelons of the White House. It has secured a status as the elite Praetorian Guard for the global war on terror, with the largest private military base in the world, a fleet of 20 aircraft and 20,000 soldiers at the ready.

From Iraq and Afghanistan to the hurricane-ravaged streets of New Orleans to meetings with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger about responding to disasters in California, Blackwater now envisions itself as the FedEx of defense and homeland security operations. Such power in the hands of one company, run by a neo-crusader bankroller of the president, embodies the "military-industrial complex" President Eisenhower warned against in 1961.

Further privatizing the country's war machine – or inventing new back doors for military expansion with fancy names like the Civilian Reserve Corps – will represent a devastating blow to the future of American democracy.

Printed with permission. Jeremy Scahill is a Puffin Foundation Writing Fellow at The Nation Institute and the author of the forthcoming "Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army." He can be reached at jeremy@democracynow.org.

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Army drops activist subpoenas for Lt. Watatda court martial

by Jeff Paterson

After surrendering earlier this week on subpoenas intended to force journalists to testify against Lt. Ehren Watada for his critical statements of President Bush and the Iraq War, the Army today dismissed subpoenas targeting three anti-war activists as well.

In December Olympia, Washington anti-war activist Phan Nguyen, and Veterans for Peace (VFP) Seattle Chapter organizers Tom Brookhart and Gerri Haynes were placed under order by the US Army to appear for the prosecution in the case of US v. Watada.

Activists were under order to help prosecute public speech

Tom Brookhart and Gerri Haynes came to the attention of Army prosecutors for their role in organizing the VFP National Convention in August where Lt. Watada was a keynote speaker. The Army has charged Lt. Watada with "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman" for the content of that presentation. Specifically, Lt. Watada's comment that "to stop an illegal and unjust war, the soldiers can choose to stop fighting it."

Phan Nguyen, a member of the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, was the moderator of a number of press conferences and rallies last summer in support of Lt. Watada. Nguyen introduced the pre-recorded video of Lt. Watada's initial statement against the war at a June 7 media event.

That video statement is the basis for the other remaining "conduct unbecoming" charge against Lt. Watada. "The wholesale slaughter and mistreatment of the Iraqi people with only limited accountability is not only a terrible moral injustice, but a contradiction to the Army's own Law of Land Warfare. My participation would make me party to war crimes," explained Lt. Watada.

When Army prosecutor Captain Kuecker first contacted Nguyen in December all of his questions focused on the behind the scenes workings of the regional anti-war movement. "Kuecker basically demanded that I name the names of any key organizers that had anything to do with the public support campaign created to support Lt. Watada," explained Nguyen. "They are clearly on a political fishing expedition. Unless we fight back, this could have a chilling effect on anti-war organizing at a time when we have to step up to end the war," he later told a Tacoma press conference on January 3.

From Port of Olympia anti-war blockade to Army witness?

Last May, Nguyen participated in the mass civil disobedience at the Port of Olympia where activists attempted to block Fort Lewis-based Stryker units for shipping out to Iraq by simply placing their bodies in the streets. The "Port Militarization Resistance" group at the time declared, "Just as soldiers have a responsibility to disobey unlawful orders, we have a responsibility to refuse to cooperate with the American Empire." 37 were arrested, but international news coverage inspired people the world over that some in America had yet to surrender to endless war.

A couple of weeks later, Nguyen heard that a local solider – an officer no less, and from that same Fort Lewis Stryker Brigade – had decided that he would "refuse illegal orders" to go to Iraq. Nguyen jumped at the chance to help. Up until this morning, Nguyen faced the choice of helping the Army prosecute that soldier, or possibly spend six months in prison in contempt of a military court if he refused.

Army dismisses all remaining subpoenas

After receiving a brief email this morning from the Fort Lewis Witness Liaison Office stating that, "the government will no longer need your testimony," Nguyen contacted Army prosecutor Captain Kuecker to verify that they had indeed backed off. Kuecker told him that "this must be a relief to those subpoenaed" and that he "never really wanted to compel us to testify," commented Nguyen.

"The subpoenas of activists were ridiculous from the start, as ridiculous as charging Lt. Watada for reiterating what every clear-thinking person already knows – that the war on Iraq is illegal and immoral. It must be difficult for the prosecution to do battle with common sense," added Nguyen today.

In discussing her own victory in leading a campaign that forced the Army to drop the subpoenas of reporters earlier this week, independent journalist Sarah Olson noted, "I am glad the growing number of dissenting voices within the military will retain their rights to speak with reporters. But I note with concern that Lt. Watada still faces prosecution for exercising his First Amendment rights during public presentations."

The Army will attempt to prosecute these two charges of public speech without the help of anti-war activists. Lt. Watada will face two years in prison for "missing movement," and another two years imprisonment for public comments critical of President Bush and the Iraq War when his court martial begins February 5 at Fort Lewis, Washington.

Jeff Paterson is an organizer for Courage to Resist www.couragetoresist.org

▸ **Port Resistance** continued from page 1

bets are off and *other tactics* will then be considered.

This continuum was proposed by City Councilmember TJ Johnson who attended the meeting and has said, "Our strategy should be conveyed in advance to the community via all available media, and directly to the Port Commissioners, County Commissioners (who authorize use of county law enforcement as security at the Port), and the Olympia City Council (since OPD will undoubtedly be asked to escort the military through town). This communication needs to happen by phone, e-mail, and most importantly in person at the televised meetings of these elected bodies."

I strongly endorse this strategy. I was present at the Port throughout most of the protests in May and was one of the people arrested on May 24 for blocking the convoy on Marine Drive. Throughout those 10 days, I felt that everyone involved in the protests demonstrated an amazing level of personal and collective initiative. But from the very outset I could not help but bemoan the lost opportunity – what more might have been achieved had we organized, well in advance, a comprehensive plan like the one described immediately above.

Blocking the convoys

By far the most commonly supported strategy at the PMR meeting was the idea of using our bodies to block the convoys before they reach the Port, organizing large enough numbers to create a sustained obstacle. "Multiple waves of human blockades," possibly comprised of various affinity groups, was mentioned more than once.

I agree that forming ourselves into blockades is our best civil disobedience (CD) option for stopping the convoys. We need to make the most efficient use of our resources, maximizing the outcome achieved for the time and effort expended. Human blockades are simple enough to satisfy that objective.

But there are logistical challenges. Prime among them is the fact that we will get very short notice about shipments, maybe 48 hours at the most. And from day to day, hour to hour, we never know for sure exactly when the convoys will arrive until they are practically upon us. Nor do we know how they will reschedule or re-route their course based on our activities. This will require a considerable degree of patience and flexibility on our part and we will need to have reliable methods of communication to keep everyone apprised of the situation as it unfolds.

Building trust, mutual empowerment

Since we can never know for sure when the convoys will arrive, neither can we plan for exactly who among us will be available when they do. Because of this and because it has been widely agreed that we need to be as inclusive as possible as we attract large numbers, we are going to have to work very consciously to build trust amongst ourselves and in the community around this campaign.

It was suggested that as many of us as possible should get some kind of civil disobedience training. Issues of safety and ideas about various approaches to CD and principles of non-violence will no doubt be the topic of ongoing discussions at future meetings. Finding common ground in these areas will help to facilitate trust.

There is a lot of support for building a large, inclusive movement embracing a broad range of strategies that will attract a broad range of people. This means welcoming people to participate in whatever manner they feel able, and expanding that previously mentioned "supportive presence and witness."

We can build an inclusive movement without watering down our message. We need fresh thinking and creativity as we plan our actions. Inviting more people to share in the planning will enhance the creative process and lead to actions with a broad appeal.

As activist and "Oly 22" defendant Phan Nguyen said, "We're all desperate for change, and we want to feel empowered. But we need to decide if we want to empower ourselves or empower *everyone*."

Complicity and duty

I believe that the Olympia peace movement is now ripe for mass actions of civil disobedience. Many people who, for years, have protested the war and the use of our port in its execution – through vigils, marches, letters, op-eds, teach-ins, public testimony and forums – are fed up. And people who have never engaged in any form of protest are now ready to act.

People are tired of being ignored by politicians and the media and are ready to take their actions to a higher level. For many, military convoys returning to Olympia would provide the perfect opportunity for CD and at a comparatively low personal cost.

Just as soldiers have a responsibility to disobey unlawful orders, civilians also have a duty to refuse to cooperate.

When Lt. Ehren Watada courageously refused to deploy to Iraq, facing court martial as a result, his position was that the war on Iraq is illegal under international law and the US Constitution. Watada and his attorneys argued that the Nuremberg Principles and US military regulations require soldiers to follow only "lawful orders." In Watada's view, deployment to Iraq would have made him party to the crimes that permeate military operations there.

Similarly, the weapons shipments through the Port of Olympia, and the use of our public property to prolong and supply the war in Iraq have made Thurston County and its citizens complicit in these crimes. We must refuse to be complicit any longer. Just as soldiers have a responsibility to disobey unlawful orders, civilians also have a duty to refuse to cooperate.

Eyes on Olympia

Can we stop these shipments from moving through our port? We will never know unless we try. If we succeed, the impact could have global and historic consequences.

And we must bear in mind that success will manifest in a variety of ways. In May 2006, our direct resistance to the militarization of our port was widely reported around the world. People everywhere found inspiration in what happened here and will be watching to see what happens in the future. Whether our organizing efforts alone deter the military from further plans to ship through our port, or if they do come and ultimately get past us, our efforts to stop them will be sure to inspire similar actions in other places.

Just as all that has gone before us has in some way led to this moment, the full impact of our efforts can never be fully known or measured. When the US finally pulls out of the Middle East it will be the result of a multitude of factors. Nothing should be discounted.

The ripple effects of ordinary people in a community coming together in a coordinated act of shared liberation and empowerment, facing down the US corporate military state, would be immeasurable. Solutions to the many deep structural problems facing our world today begin with acts like this.

Sandy Mayes lives in Olympia where she raised her son and has worked as a registered nurse since 1984. She is the Content Coordinator of Work In Progress *and a founding member of the Port Militarization Resistance.*

For a comprehensive archive of Olympia's resistance to the military's use of its port visit **www.omjp.org** . See also **www.olywip.org** .

For more information on the next PMR meeting after Feb. 4th., contact 360-867-1477.

STOP THE WAR!

During the week of the four-year anniversary of the US invasion on Iraq, there will be mulitple opportunities in Olympia for citizens to join together and say ENOUGH!

SAVE THESE DATES:

Tuesday, March 20
Rally and march on the state Capitol with focus on legislative action

Thursday, March 22
Actions targeting military recruitment centers

Saturday, March 24
Huge rally/festival/march

These and other activities, in the early stages of planning, are being organized by OMJP in coordination with other local peace and justice groups. Mark these dates on your calendar and stay tuned for details.

NOT IN OUR PORT!

"Port Militarization Resistance is organized to end our community's complicity in the illegal occupation of Iraq by stopping the U.S. military's use of the Port of Olympia."

Port Militarization Resistance statement of purpose -- 1/21/2007

Join us as we explore ways to prevent or, if necessary, respond directly to continued use of our port in waging the war in Iraq.

NEXT MEETING:

Sunday, Feb 4
at 7:00 pm at

Traditions Cafe &
World Folk Art
300-5th Ave SW, Olympia

Nader still in the crosshairs

by Mickey Z.

I was at the gym, walking by a television tuned to one of the many insipid morning chat shows...but that's not what stopped me dead in my tracks. What got my attention was the guest: Ralph Nader. I watched the host begin the interview with yet another rehash/accusation/question about the 2000 election. You know the drill by now: Nader spoiled it for Gore, ruined his own legacy, blah, blah, blah. It's been repeated so often that most Americans accept it all as fact.

After having read New York magazine the night before, that first question was all I could stomach. You see, David Edelstein, the magazine's film critic, just reviewed An Unreasonable Man, a new documentary about Nader. The self-important Edelstein spoke of receiving an invitation to see the film and meet Nader afterwards. "I wrote (that) I couldn't make it," said Edelstein, "but to leave my seat vacant in the name of the Iraqi and American dead."

Left unsaid, of course, is his belief that Nader cost Al Gore the election and that Gore would never have invaded Iraq. While neither point can ever be fully proven true or false, I do have a question for Edelstein: If Al Gore cares so much about the Iraqi dead, why didn't he speak out against the murderous sanctions when he was vice president? A half-million dead Iraqi children and Gore did not say one fuckin' word in public to condemn it.

I'm also wondering if, during the Clinton-Gore years, Edelstein peppered his film reviews with similar self-righteous political statements. How about when Clinton bombed Iraq in response to an alleged plot to assassinate Bush the Elder and ended up killing Leila Attar, that country's best-known female artist?

What did the millionaire morning chat show hosts and the haughty New York magazine film critic say about that? Better question: Were they even aware it happened?

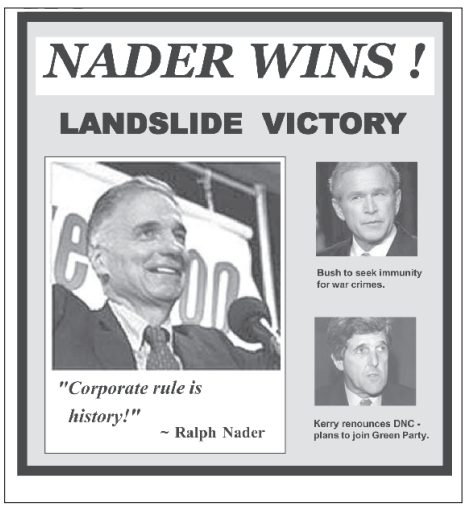
"What we have with Edelstein is the typical liberal phenomena: blame Nader instead of facing the facts," says Joshua Frank, author of Left Out: How Liberals Help Re-elect George W. Bush. "The reason Nader even made any headway in 2000 was due to his ability to tap into the mounting anti-globalization movement that was launched in Seattle one year earlier. Progressive, and even radical voters saw Nader as their chance to hold the neoliberals' feet to the fire."

Also in his "review," Edelstein declares Nader to be "obviously nuts" for making the assertion that there wasn't "a dime's bit of difference" between Bush and Gore. This statement is presented as an article of faith as Edelstein offers no evidence. Why should he when probably 99.9% of his readers agree with him?

"Nobody can say Gore wasn't a neoliberal," says Frank. "He supported NAFTA, pushed WTO/China legislation-Al Gore was a proud New Democrat for many years and that was only part of it. Under Clinton/Gore environmentalists got the Salvage Rider and the derailment of Kyoto. The working poor got welfare reform. Labor got free trade. And Iraqi kids got deadly sanctions. Those are the reasons Nader had such a powerful campaign in 2000. I think if liberals can't face that, they are the ones who are 'nuts'."

Take-home message: If all those Gore voters had pulled the lever for Ralph, we all would've been spared both the Bush administration and the Nader witch-hunt... plus, David Edelstein could to stick to writing about film.

Mickey Z. can be found on the Web at http://www.mickeyz.net.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~ Ralph Nader
Bush to seek immunity for war crimes.
Kerry renounces DNC - plans to join Green Party.

The Works in Progress mock-up election cover from November of 2004.

Lt. Watada speaks out in Olympia

by Janine Gates

"I swore no oath to the Commander-in-Chief, but to the Constitution," said Lt. Ehren Watada, a Fort Lewis, Washington commissioned officer, who is facing court-martial and a possible four year prison sentence for refusing to go to Iraq.

Watada spoke before a crowd of several hundred in Olympia at South Puget Sound Community College Wednesday night. Most were sympathetic with his cause and interrupted Lt. Watada several times, often with a standing ovation, during his nearly two hour speech.

Watada, dressed in plain clothes, spoke calmly and evenly. He admitted that soldiers not performing their duties during wartime will lead to the degradation of the armed forces. "That's why," Watada, said, "...it must be a just war."

Lt. Watada on Fort Lewis during pre-trial hearing, 1/4/07. Photo by Jeff Paterson.

The US government refuses to document Iraqi civilians deaths, but it is estimated that over 650,000 have died. It is reported that 1.8 million refugees have fled Iraq, mostly into nearby Syria. "Unemployment within Iraq is at 70%. Eighty percent of commissioned officers have gotten divorced since the Iraq War started, and reconstruction efforts have failed," Watada said.

"I don't have to be a general or a PhD, or 'stay within my pay range' to speak out," Watada said. "In a democracy, everyone is a politician. Who is acting on our behalf (the enlisted)? Who is speaking for us? Is it any wonder I have stood up?" Watada asked the audience.

"I am not against war, but I am against a war that supports corporate interests. When I joined the military three and a half years ago, I did not join to be an agitator. We have all been deceived over the war. Fifty percent of Americans feel that there are still weapons of mass destruction. Seventy four percent of service members believe Saddam Hussein had something to do with 9-11," Watada said.

"People are more interested in American Idol and Fantasy Football – don't get me wrong. Sometimes I would rather be somewhere else than bringing awareness of what is going on," Watada admitted.

"Yes, I have broken rank. I have not been a good lieutenant. But my life does not matter...We are expanding terrorism, not stemming it.... I think I know why my fellow soldiers have died. For me, for you, to ensure this does not happen again."

"In Congress, 536 people will decide our future. Will they do so in a vacuum, or as our servants? What kind of democracy are we living in where voting machines are made by companies that have ties to politicians?"

"Here we sit today, a sick déjà vu...Iraq is Vietnam...Terrorism is a new communism. It is one thing to end a war, it's another thing to make sure it never happens again. You have the power to fulfill your obligation to each other. In the end, I have tried." Watada said.

During the question and answer period, someone asked, simply, "What specifically can we do to stop the war in Iraq?" "Knowledge," Watada responded. "We need to build a mass movement of people who know what is going on. We need to show up, we need to protest, we need to do things we don't feel comfortable doing. For each of us, we have to do what is right to each of us. Do what is right, regardless of the consequences."

Asked, "If you don't believe in the war, why did you join the Army?" Watada responded, "I believed the Administration three and a half years ago. [President Bush] played upon our fear and our ignorance. It was only when I found out the facts that by staying in the Army, I realized I was in violation of my oath...I joined the Army to defend my country and I am doing that today."

Watada, considered a coward by some, said he twice offered to go Afghanistan. He was told that "if we let you go there, then that would be an admission that something was wrong with Iraq."

"It's not that I was scared to go, or that I am a conscientious objector. When they offered me a safe position behind a desk, I said no," Watada explained. "When you look back, we will see the rampant criminality of this administration."

Lt. Watada's court martial will begin on Monday, February 5 at Ft. Lewis and it is open to the public. Carpools and buses will be organized by supporters. For more information, contact the Western Washington Veterans for Peace at www.vfp92.org or www.thankyoult.org.

Janine Gates, a freelance writer and photographer, can be reached through her website at www.janinegatesphotography.com.

Upcoming Watada events

All day vigil outside Fort Lewis

Stand with Lt. Ehren Watada

Mon., Feb. 5, all day at the Interstate-5 Exit 119 gate to the Ft. Lewis Army base.

Take action against the Iraq war and in support of Lt. Watada during his military court martial. There will be an all-day vigil, and other scheduled events. Supporters are arriving early that morning to display banners in support of Lt. Watada and hold vigil as the court martial begins. Schedule of events:

*** 9:00 am Court Martial begins**

*** 11:30 am Rally with Iraq Veterans Against the War and spoken word youth artists**

*** 1:00 pm Street Theatre performance**

*** 3:00 pm Rally**

There will be a space to get warm throughout the day at the Liberty Inn located at I-5 Exit 118. Shuttles to and from to the demonstration location at I-5 Exit 119 will be provided by Friends and Family of Lt. Watada.

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People gather for a sit-in on Olympia's downtown sidewalk to protest the opening day of the the sidewalk ordinance targeted to discriminate the homeless (photo by Sandy Mayes)

What's going on here?

Picketing against the Pedestrian Interference Ordinance, fundraising for the Poor People's Union, and direct action in opposition to the Pedestrian Interference Ordinance.

This event happens at noon to 1:30 pm and again from 4:30 to 6:00 pm on February 8th, and again on February 15th. There are two planned locations — 4th & Franklin and 5th & Capitol.

NO EXIT
© Andy Singer
I, ORWELL MAN, AM NO "DICTATOR!" I'M A "DECIDER!" I OBSERVE DEMOCRATIC IDEALS BY IGNORING CONGRESS AND THE PEOPLE I GOVERN. THIS YEAR WILL DEMAND SACRIFICE, HUMAN SACRIFICE, OF YOUR CHILDREN ON MY ALTAR OF LIES AND FAILURE! GOD BLESS ME!
SINGER

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Offering a response to Senator Webb:

What the United States really needs to hear

by Joshua Frank

Shortly after President Bush's State of the Union address last week Jim Webb, the freshman Senator from Virginia, delivered the Democrats' televised response to Bush's annual speech. Many antiwar progressives were pleased to hear a Democrat confront the Bush rhetoric head-on. Media critic Jeff Cohen went even further and argued that Webb's riposte was not only aimed at the Bush administration, but also at Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama.

"Whether intended or not," wrote Cohen, "Webb was offering a way for Democrats to win elections – a script for any presidential candidate who wants to distinguish him or herself in the primaries, and then defeat the Republicans in Nov. 2008."

Cohen and I must have been watching different programs. Sen. Webb's position on the Iraq war was little more than a sugarcoated pill packed full of the usual irony. Webb painted the situation in Iraq as a result of Bush's poor planning and not the more obvious illegalities and lies that drove our country into battle. As Webb put it, "We are now, as a nation, held hostage to the predictable – and predicted – disarray that has followed."

Never once did we hear Webb utter the bitter truth about the Iraq crisis. Certainly the invasion and subsequent occupation were not "mismanaged" as Webb and many others have put it, rather the civil war now engulfing Iraq is a result of a criminal performance carried out by President Bush that was enabled and encouraged by the leaders of the Democratic Party dating back to President Clinton.

Webb also did not express any significant criticisms of the "war on terror" as he seems to believe in its underlying premise. Consequently he did not mention that he disagrees with the increase of troops in Afghanistan or the recent air strikes of suspected terrorist cells in Somali. And despite his anger at Bush's reckless mismanagement of Iraq, he didn't dare bring up that all but forgotten subject: impeachment.

Webb also noted that he was opposed to "a precipitous withdrawal that ignores the possibility of further chaos" and instead called for a "strong regionally-based diplomacy, a policy that takes our soldiers off the streets of Iraq's cities, and a formula that will in short order allow our combat forces to leave Iraq." In essence Webb doesn't believe US troops should leave Iraq at once. We may as well call that just more of the same. All talk, no action.

And this is the type of winning formula Jeff Cohen believes the Democratic presidential candidates should use to distinguish themselves from Republicans? Right now the most visible and articulate antiwar senator is Republican Chuck Hagel of Nebraska. If anything, Democratic presidential hopefuls and others should take a cue from Hagel on Iraq, not Webb. In a recent interview in GQ, Hagel went as far as to say that what's going on in Iraq is "even worse than a civil war, because in addition to the sectarian violence, you've got Shia killing Shia. We have ethnic cleansing of major proportions going on in Baghdad."

Enough with the nonsense. Senator Hagel's straight talk is what the American public really needs to hear.

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